**IT Applications, Unit 4**

**Security and ethical considerations, Ch. 8, p 308**

Ethics and Information Systems

1. Explain what is meant by the term ethics.

Ethics are the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by individuals and social groups. Ethical behaviour often guides policy makers within an organisation, as it refers to behaving in ways that are based on morals and accepted standards.

1. What is the ethical dilemma in relation to video games?

The ethical dilemma in relation to video games is the amount of violence contained within them. Many people believe that such violent images should not be included in video games because of the negative impact it has on children.

Key areas relating to ethics and information systems are:

1. Workplace responsibilities
   1. Outline the responsibilities of employees and employers.

Employees and employers are responsible for the way they carry themselves towards each other and clients, following codes of conduct, following company computer-use policies, employee monitoring and allowing free speech on the internet.

1. Codes of conduct and computer-use policies
   1. What is meant by a code of conduct?

A code of conduct is a set of conventional principles are expectations which are considered binding on any member of a particular group.

* 1. What information do computer-use policies generally contain?

A computer-use policy explains to staff what management believes should and should not be done on the computers or peripheral equipment within a workplace. Employees will then be in no doubt about what is permitted and when.

1. Employee monitoring
   1. Why are these systems sometimes regarded as unethical?

Employee monitoring is carried out by employers to see what employees are doing, this can be seen as being unethical as it invades upon an employee’s privacy.

* 1. Where does the most common monitoring occur?

The most common monitoring of employees is done through monitoring their emails, PC use and web browsing. For example email messages can be automatically redirected to a manager if they contain certain words or attachments.

* 1. List the advantages and disadvantages of employee monitoring.

The advantages of employee monitoring are:

* If staff know that they are being watched on the computer they may be less likely to slacken off or do things that are not work related.
* It may save time and money for the employer

The disadvantages of employee monitoring are:

* Employees may feel their employer is intrusive
* Employees may feel increases stress levels as they do not know if they are being ‘spied on’
* It may cause mistrust between supervisors and staff
  1. How is web browsing monitored?

Web browsing is usually monitored through the use of automatic logs, these logs are either stored on the users own machine in the form of cookies or on a history of sites.

* 1. What is a cookie?

Cookies are small files that a web server stores on a user’s computer. They will typically contain information about the user, such as their email address and web-viewing preferences. A cookie is sent to the computer when a website is browsed, it is then stored on the computer’s hard disk. When the same website is next accessed the browser retrieves the information from the cookie and sends it to the cookie in the website.

1. Ethics and the internet
   1. Explain what is meant by the term, netiquette.

Netiquette is a term that shortens the words network etiquette. It refers to the conventions for politeness that are observed in internet communications, such as newsgroups or mailing lists. Netiquette evolved as a means of regulating what people say on the internet.

* 1. List some netiquette guidelines

Some guidelines for netiquette include:

* Not posting to inappropriate groups
* Refraining from commercial advertising
* Not posting personal messages from individuals to newsgroups
* When responding to an earlier posting the minimum necessary context should be quoted
* Lines should be less than 70 characters long
* Before asking a question a user should read the existing messages in the groups frequently asked questions (FAQs)

**Resolving legal, ethical and social tensions,** p 514

1. List the six steps for handling ethical dilemmas.

As working in an organisation with ethical, legal and social tensions can be uncomfortable there should be measures to handle these tensions. The six steps for handling ethical dilemmas are:

1. Identify the problem- what decision has to be made and what are the facts required?
2. Identify the stakeholders- who are they? What interests do they have? Who is the key player?
3. Identify the possible alternatives- what options are available? What are the likely consequences?
4. Identify the ethical standards- are there any applicable laws? Are there any morals or standards that could be applied? Is there a precedent?
5. Evaluate options- identify the strengths and weaknesses. Identify which option causes the least harm. Can the decision be reversed?
6. Make a decision- select the preferred option. Justify the option

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